



# **SOAR: How we got here**

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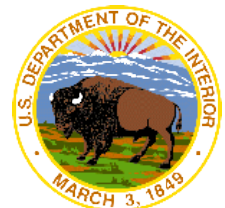
## **The COMIDA Workshop**

In preparation for possible oil and gas exploration in the Chukchi Sea, MMS (now BOEM) conducted the Chukchi Offshore Monitoring in the Drilling Area (COMIDA) planning workshop November 1-3, 2006, in Anchorage.

More than 100 scientists and stakeholders participated in the workshop to identify potential monitoring tasks for a COMIDA field effort to meet Agency needs. Identified topics include:

- Chemical and hydrocarbon monitoring
- Physical oceanography
- Potential impacts on benthic organisms, fish and birds
- Characterization of the ecosystem
- Distribution and abundance of marine mammals: tagging, aerial surveys, acoustic assessments
- Impact assessment for subsistence hunting

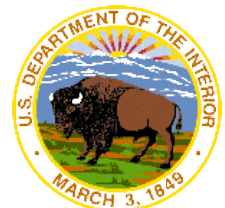
More than \$20,000,000 in MMS/BOEM funded research evolved directly from the COMIDA Workshop.



# The Background of SOAR

The idea for this Synthesis project was first developed by BOEM scientists in 2009 (for the FY 2011 Studies Plan), in recognition of the fact that MMS/BOEM will have invested more than \$50,000,000 in marine mammal and related physical, chemical and biological oceanography studies in the western Arctic between 2005 and 2015. Recently completed and ongoing studies include:

- Bowhead Whale Feeding Variability in the Western Alaskan Beaufort Sea: Satellite Tracking of Bowhead Whales & Oceanography and Feeding (BOWFEST)
- Ecosystem Observations in the Chukchi Sea: Passive Acoustic Detection and Monitoring of Endangered Whales in the Arctic & Biophysical Mooring and Climate Modeling (CHAOZ)
- Distribution and Relative Abundance of Marine Mammals in the Chukchi Sea the Fall Migration of Bowhead Whales in the Beaufort Sea (BWASP & COMIDA aerial surveys)
- Walrus Habitat Use in the Potential Drilling Area
- Pinniped Movements and Foraging: Bearded Seals
- COMIDA CAB
- Hanna Shoal Ecosystem Study
- Arctic marine research studies supported through NOPP and many others



# **The Background of SOAR**

In May 2011, BOEM and NOAA signed an Interagency Agreement to support a synthesis of scientific information drawn from completed and ongoing marine research in the Pacific Arctic region.

